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# A N S W E R

T O

Mr. *P O P E*'s P R E F A C E

To *S H A K E S P E A R*.

In a *Letter* to a F R I E N D.

B E I N G

A V I N D I C A T I O N of the O L D A C T O R S  
who were the Publishers and Performers of  
that A U T H O R's *Plays*.

W H E R E B Y

The E R R O R S of their *Edition* are further  
accounted for, and some *Memoirs* of S H A K E -  
S P E A R and *Stage-History* of His Time are in-  
serted, which were never before collected and  
publish'd.

---

By a Stroling PLAYER. *John Roberts*

---

*Say from what Cause (by all condemn'd and curst!)  
Still BAYS the Second rails like BAYS the First!*

Right Reading of the *Dunciad Variorum* from a  
Manuscript (revised and collated by this Au-  
thor) which is interpolated by the last Editor.

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Printed in the Year MDCCXXIX.

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An ANSWER to  
Mr. POPE's PREFACE  
TO  
SHAKESPEAR.  
*In a Letter to a Friend.*

S I R,



IN Compliance with your Request, I have here given you my Answer, as far as open Truth, Sincerity, and plain Matter of Fact could support the Attempt: And where I have those real Grounds for the Argument, I think I cannot be blam'd for differing in Opinion from Mr. Pope, *Quem honoris causâ Nomino*: How far the same Reasons may prevail with others I know not; but such as they are, I submit them to your candid Censure in the rude indigested Draught of a familiar Epistle.

When I had carefully read through the last Edition of *Shakespear*, I perused the Preface to that Work, in full Expectation to have the Case and Causes of the Blunders and innumerable Errors, which are deliver'd down to us thro' all

A

that

that Author's Plays, therein clearly Traced and Stated by that Learned Editor, I was as much disappointed as you declare yourself, and equally surpriz'd to see that Great Man so much at a Loss where to fix; for first, as you may observe, He charges them on *Shakespear*, and not content with that, he wavers, and taxes the poor Editors *Hemings* and *Condell*, but that is not sufficient, he is resolv'd to lug in the whole *Tribe*, and one way or other THE PLAYERS must answer for them all: And thus they lie on *Shakespear's* Judgment as a Player, who was the Poet; on *Hemings* and *Condell's* Ignorance as Players, who were the old *Publishers*; and on the *Illiteracy* of all *his* and *their* contemporary Brethren, who were only the *Actors* and *Performers*; and every one else (even *Prompters* and *Partwriters*, &c,) that had any the least Concern in the *Playhouse*. In the first Place as to *Shakespear*,

‘ Another Cause, SAYS HE, (*besides being oblig'd*  
‘ *to please the lowest of People, and to keep the*  
‘ *worst Company*) may be deduc'd from our Au-  
‘ thor's being a Player, and forming himself first  
‘ upon the Judgment of that Body of Men,  
‘ whereof he was a Member. They have ever  
‘ had a Standard to themselves upon other Prin-  
‘ ciples than those of *Aristotle*. As they live by  
‘ the Majority, they know no Rule, but that of  
‘ pleasing the present Humour, and complying  
‘ with the Wit in Fashion. A Consideration  
‘ which brings all their Judgments to a short  
‘ Point. Players are just such Judges of what  
‘ is Right, as Tailors are of what is Graceful,  
‘ and

‘ and in this View, it will be but fair to allow  
 ‘ that most of our Author’s Faults are less to be  
 ‘ ascrib’d to his wrong Judgment as a Poet, than  
 ‘ his right Judgment as a Player.

It seems pretty plain, that this Consideration will reduce the Judgment of the Poets to as short a Point as the Players, (I mean the *Dramatists*) for they live likewise by the Majority, and the chief Rule with them, as well as the Players, is that of pleasing the present Humour, and complying with the Wit in Fashion: For I remember since I learnt my *Terence*, as the Stage-Boy says in the Induction to *Ben. Johnson’s Magnetick Lady*, concerning this very Argument.

*Poeta cum primum animum ad Scribendum appulit  
 Hoc sibi negoti credidit Solum dari,  
 Populo ut placerent, &c.*

And in this View (if between you and me, I may take the Liberty to set them in the same) it will be but fair to allow that the Difference of Judgment between the Poet and the Player, is no more than betwixt one Taylor who cuts out the Cloth according to Rule and Measure, and t’other that makes it up, and fits it to the Body, according to that cutting out. So that both here can be reckon’d no more than Taylors in Judgment as to what is Graceful; and if this were to stand for an Argument, the Poets wou’d be deem’d, of their own Works, no better Judges than the Players. But I see no Necessity for decrying either of their Judgments in this Case;



and therefore think it as utterly unreasonable to call *Shakespear's* Judgment in Question as an Author, because he was an Actor, as to degrade Mr. *Pope's* Capacity as a Poet because he is *Pope* the Editor.

To reconcile what he calls here *Shakespear's* *right* Judgment as a *Player*, and his *wrong* Judgment as a *Poet*, is far above my reach; I shall therefore refer it to those wiser Heads who can perfectly understand it: I always thought in regard of Dramatick Poetry as well as every thing else, that Judgment was Judgment, let who will be the Possessor of it, and when 'tis *Right* it can't be *Wrong*: But I find I was very much mistaken, for 'tis a Maxim it seems, that when a Player has the *Impudence* to have any *Judgment* of Writing, it must be *Wrong* of Course. And therefore my differing in Opinion from this Gentleman, in so material a Point, must be ascrib'd to the general Calamity of wrong Judging that attends us all: That is to say, *to my right Judgment as a Player*. Poet and Player, in his Thoughts are inconsistent, and 'tis impossible for any Person to have any Quantity of judicial Knowledge in Poetry, if he ever engages on the Stage, tho' he has the Advantage of Classick Education and the Politest Conversation, yet as being a Player it is not *rightly* Judgment in him; for all Judgment is engross'd into the Keeping of the Poets only, and if they are all of his Opinion they are resolv'd not to quit Possession or spare the Players the least Share.

I protest I am so dull of Apprehension, I can't understand what it is he imputes to *Shakespear's right Judgment as a Player*, for his complying with the Wit in Fashion and pleasing the reigning Humour, certainly belongs to *his wrong Judgment as a Poet*: As does every thing else, in my mind, that *Pope* has particularly laid to his Charge, and the chief Article against his wrong Judgment as a Poet consists of his *Superfætatations*, and herein this Editor follows *Johnson* in his *Discoveries*, who shamefully brands *Shakespear*, with falling into some things that cou'd not escape Laughter, and very scandalously makes a false Quotation and misrepresents his Meaning. But even these, *Johnson* lays expressly on *Shakespear*, and only charges the Players with *Mis-judgment in commending their Friend wherein he most faulted*: Yet our present Editor still dissatisfied with this, wou'd fain acquit *Shakespear*, and load the poor Players, with whatever proceeds from *his wrong Judgment as a Poet*, as is manifest by repeated Reflections dispers'd throughout the whole Work for that Purpose.

‘ By these Men it was thought a Praise to  
 ‘ *Shakespear*, that he scarce ever blotted a Line.  
 ‘ This they industriously propagated, as appears  
 ‘ from what we are told by *Ben. Johnson* in his  
 ‘ *Discoveries* — ‘ I remember (says *Johnson*)  
 ‘ The Players have often mention'd it as an Ho-  
 ‘ nour to *Shakespear*, that he never blotted out a  
 ‘ Line, to which I answer'd, *Wou'd he had blotted*  
 ‘ *out a Thousand!* Which they thought a male-  
 ‘ volent Speech.

That

That this shou'd be condemn'd by *Johnson* and *Pope*, as a Fault first in *Shakespear*, and next in the Players for commending it, is highly unreasonable. According to the Nature of the Thing, it ought to stand in his Favcur as they intended it; for it is to be Understood in plain Terms, no otherwise than their bare Account and Character (and I believe was never used any otherwise) of his extensive Genius and Exuberance of Fancy; That his Thoughts flow'd so swift upon him, (*as no Author ever had such a prodigious Compass*) he cou'd not spare Time to correct at the Juncture of Penning them, but always committed to Paper what rude Ideas presented themselves in his vast Imagination, and deferr'd their Improvement and Correction to his disengaged Hours, and a more leisure Recollection: And that this was his Practise, is greatly confirm'd by the improv'd Editions of those Pieces, (as Mr. *Pope* acknowledges) which were publish'd in his Life time, and yet this does not destroy or gainsay, the Character given of him by his Fellow-Players, *That he never blotted out a Line*, at his Time of Writing and Composing the Work; notwithstanding Mr. *Pope* affirms, *there never was a more groundless Report*. These Men, no doubt, were very well acquainted with the Method and Custom of their Brother Comedian, who was daily at Study for their Stage, and for the Course of Years, of his Writing for, and belonging to, the Theaters; not Superior in Fortune or Fame to the Rest, and of Consequence not so reserv'd, but his Companions well knew his Manner of Writing: And yet *Pope's* contradicting



tradiſting this Report of the Players, and affirming it to be groundleſs, ſtill allows that *Shakeſpear* did blot out and correct (and this he mainly ſtrengthens himſelf by ſeveral Inſtances, that is, he gives the Names of ſome Plays, *The Merry Wives of Windſor*, *Henry the Fifth*, and *Sixth*, and *Hamlet*, which He *new Writ*, *extreamly improv'd*, and *enlarg'd to almoſt as much again as at firſt* ; So that you muſt needs be ſo good-natur'd, to allow *Shakeſpear's* putting in ſome Thouſands of Lines, to be an unqueſtionable Proof, of his putting out the ſame Quantity, or elſe Mr. *Pope* and I, *ſic parvis componere, &c.* will loſe our Aim) and therefore Mr. *Johnson* was to blame not to prove this Falſe before, yet he grants it to be *Faſt* but *culpable* !

In the end I don't find any Neceſſity for either of their Speeches ; either *JOHNSON's* *Wou'd he had blotted out a Thouſand* ! Or *POPE's* *There never was a more groundleſs Report* ! The firſt I declare with thoſe *miſ-judging Players* was a *malevolent Speech* ; and as to the latter, I deny, *the undeniable Evidences to the Contrary*. They are both Malevolent enough to the Actors ; for *Johnson* inclines to ſay it as much in direct Oppoſition of Opinion to the Players, as in Detraction of *Shakeſpear* ; and *Pope* pronounces his, for no other View or Reaſon, than to give the Players in general, the poſitive Lye.

And till our Prefacer more expreſſly points out, and directly explains, what it is that he attributes to this Author's *right Judgment*, as a Player, I can't

can't pretend to answer; and his wrong Judgment as a Poet, I shall not presume to enter upon, for in attempting it, perhaps, I shou'd be in the *Right* again, and unhappily discover my *wrong Judgment* as a Player, and injudiciously his *right Judgment* as a Poet: As all the Criticisms made from *Johnson's Days* to *Pope's*, come short of this great Subject, in clearing *Shakespear's* Beauties and pointing his Defects: And all that has been, or can be said, against *his wrong Judgment as a Poet*, amounts to no more than *Johnson's Sufflamendus erat*.—— No Writer was every where equal: *Homer* himself sometimes nods; and it is acknowledg'd by the most severe Censurers, as well as *Johnson*, That SHAKESPEAR redeem'd his Vices with his Virtues, and there was ever more in him, to be prais'd than to be pardon'd.—— I wish we cou'd say the same of our Moderns, but the Spirit of Snarling possesses some so virulently, that they dim the Lustre of all their Beauties, by their unbounded ill Nature and universal Calumny.

I cannot give into the Opinion, that *Johnson's* Friendship to *Shakespear* continu'd through Life, or even was faithfully preserv'd any part of it, and therein beg Pardon, that I once more dissent from this *infallible* EDITOR: If it is an acknowledg'd Fact that *Ben. Johnson* was introduc'd upon the Stage, and his first Works encourag'd by *Shakespear*, How mean, how base, and malevolent does it appear in him, to pick out a single Sentence from all his Writings, and misquote it after his Friend's Decease, in order to reproach him  
with

with Weakness of Judgment, and expose him to Ridicule and Laughter? It wou'd have greatly proved his Gratitude, and Honour of his Memory, if he had carefully revis'd the Volume of his Plays, and other Impressions, and purged them from all the Absurdities of the *Printers* and *Players*; For he had Learning, Conversation, Friendship to the Man, (if you will believe our *Prefacer*) Leisure of Life long after him; *right Judgment as a Poet*; and Instigations from the derogatory Applauses of the Players, &c. But he was too full of his own Merit, and too invidious of his Rivals, to oppose the least Thing that weaken'd the Reputation of any one of them: And it is to be fear'd, that if he had undertaken this Task (well becoming his Friendship profess'd!) We shou'd have seen as many Injuries from his prejudic'd Pen, as from all the Abuses, which now stand charg'd on the Players. But to return to the particular View of this Epistle, I shall now come to that Part of the Charge impos'd on the Players as *his EDITORS*.

And here, granting all Mr. *Pope* has said, were true, in regard of *Hemings* and *Condel*; Must he asperse, rail at, and revile the whole Profession, for these two Men? There were but these *Two*, that we can prove, concern'd in the Publication of the *Folio* Edition: Why then must they all suffer such severe Censure? ——— No Matter, he declares, they were a Pack of *Players* of the same Time, if not of the same Theatre, and a Company of the meerest Dunces sure, that any Age had together before or since; and *undoubtedly deserv'd* all that he has urg'd against them. They



were a Parcel of *Tavern-Haunters* and *Ale-Drinkers*, and were glad to get into the *Butteries*, poor Rogues, I warrant you, with the *Butlers*, as well as the *Stewards*! But how comes it, they were in general so very Ignorant and Stupid? Why, because *The best Playhouses were then, but Inns and Taverns, and the Top of the Profession were then meer Players, not Gentlemen of the Stage: They were led into the Buttery by the Steward, not placed at the Lord's Table, or the Lady's Toilette.*---- Scandalously has he depriv'd this Old Set of Actors, of all and every Qualification of Mind befitting a Player, and requisite for the Business. He takes away their Education and Conversation, delivers them utterly void of Understanding, not Masters even of Common Sense, or indu'd with any Natural or Acquir'd Parts, and in the End is very loath to afford them a competent Knowledge of their Mother-Tongue, much less of any other, dead or living Language: *Their French is as bad as their Latin, their very Welch is false; and Prose from Verse they did not know, but accordingly printed one for t'other.*—— Why, what a Tribe of wretched Fellows must these be? And after all this, I wonder what they really did understand? They were *wrong Judges* of Poetry! They knew *Nothing* of Playing! They had no Comfort of polite Conversation! Nor had they any further *Taste of Life or Letters*, than what they cou'd pick up over a Pot of Beer, with their unthinking *Brethren*, in the *Inns*, where they play'd, or in taking a sparing Bottle of my Lord's Wine, *in the Buttery, with his very learned Steward.*—— Oh, but this Invective against the  
Comedians

Comedians of old, conveys no Scandal to the Gentlemen of the later Stages, and worthier Followers of this Profession ; For he pays a Compliment to their better Understandings, and very generously allows them the Credit and Satisfaction (I won't say he's sorry for't) *of a Familiarity and Dearness with Persons of the first Rank of Nobility, and all other the superior Advantages they Enjoy, both in Education and Conversation.* — You may have forgot the Paragraph, and therefore I transcribe it at length.

‘ Having been *forc'd* to say so much of the  
 ‘ *Players*, I think, I ought in Justice, to remark,  
 ‘ that the *Judgment*, as well as *Condition*, of *that*  
 ‘ *Class of People*, was then far inferior, to what  
 ‘ it is in our Days. As then the best Play-  
 ‘ houses, were *Inns* and *Taverns*, (the *Globe*, the  
 ‘ *Hope*, the *Red-Bull*, the *Fortune*, &c.) So the  
 ‘ *Top of the Profession* were then *meer* Players,  
 ‘ not *Gentlemen of the Stage* : They were led in-  
 ‘ to the *Buttery* by the *Steward*, not placed at  
 ‘ the *Lord's Table*, or the *Lady's Toilette* : And  
 ‘ consequently were intirely depriv'd of those Ad-  
 ‘ vantages they now Enjoy, in the familiar Con-  
 ‘ versation of our Nobility, and an *Intimacy* (not  
 ‘ to say *Dearness*) with People of the first Con-  
 ‘ dition. *Sic ait POPE* —

But how comes all this Complaisance to the Modern Stagers ? Only because in His very Edition of *Shakespear*, he is greatly indebted to the *Theatrical Improvements*, which They (by being according to his Confession, something better

Judges of Men and Manners, than the former have redeem'd from Oblivion either from *Antique* Editions, or remnant *Manuscripts*, many of which, in what we call the Stock Plays, he has borrow'd and publish'd as his own: Tho' at the same Time, he won't allow *these Gentlemen of the Stage*, to be any Judges of what is *right*, and brings (for with a certain *Inuendo*, he every where uses it in the *present Tense*) all their Judgment to that short Point, of pleasing the present Humour, and complying with the Wit in Fashion. They may be, and he infers they are, better Judges as Players, but still it comes to the short Point above, of being no better than *Taylor*s are of what is *Graceful*, and their *right Judgment as Players*, must be *wrong*, in regard of the *Poets*. Besides there is no certain Grounds for taxing *These* or *Them* with such frequent *Interpolations*, tho' this calumnious Editor has so often charg'd *Both* with Innovations of this kind, *proceeding from one Source, The Ignorance of the Players, both as his Actors and his Editors*: And as to the Article of their *shortening* some *Scenes*, as well as that of the *Additions* of *Scenes*, *Speeches*, *Incidents*, *Words*, &c. no doubt, have been from the *Poets* own Choice, or Consent, weigh'd with Judgment, (be it *right* or *wrong*) as Poet and Player. For tho' his Plays were not all *publish'd* till after his Death, we may conclude, they were all *perform'd* in his Life; and thereupon, 'tis reasonable to think, that what ever *Scenes* are lopp'd off, and neglected, even to this Day, in the Representation, were then, and are now serv'd so, from some traditional Foundation



dation and Authority from *Shakespear*. And whilst we can impute it to this in part, or intirely so, I can find no Reason substantial enough, to charge it on the Ignorance, &c. of the Players. Especially since such Loppings pass with general Approbation of our Auditors, and much to the Advantage of our Author; which is evident, from the Omissions of *Hamlet*, *Othello*, &c. and I can produce this *Editor's* Allowance of the same, tho' upon this Spot, he can't be reconciled to their cutting out, or putting in, in any Degree.

In special Answer to the Articles alledged in general, I shall shew what Foundation he had for all that he maintains against our Theatrical Predecessors, and Demonstrate how just he is in his History and Character, of their Capacities and Condition, By setting before you the most considerable and authentick MEMOIRS of those *Antique Players*, who were of the same Stage, or, at least, of the same Age, with SHAKESPEAR and his *Original Editors*.

It is allow'd, that as the Reign of *Queen Elizabeth*, is one of the most shining Parts of our History, and an Age, of which *Englishmen* are accusom'd to speak with a particular Pride and Delight; it is also remarkable, for having been Fruitful in Eminent *Genius's*, of very different Kinds. And among the rest flourish'd several of Great Capacity, in the Practice of Acting and Stage-Playing, whose Excellencies stand recorded, in a particular Manner, by the grave Author of the *Chronicle of England*, among the Heroes and distinguish'd

distinguish'd Men of that Age, and were likewise, in so great Esteem with that Learned Man, Sir *Francis Walsingham*, that he procured *Her Majesty* to entertain *Twelve* of them as her *Comedians* and *Servants*, and establish'd them in *Sallaries* accordingly.

To give the Alphabetical List of those I have selected, I must begin with the renown'd Ornament of that ancient Stage,

\*\*\*\*\*

Mr. EDWARD ALLEN,

\*\*\*\*\*

Of whom Sir *Richard Baker* writes in the following Manner.

‘ After such Men, (says he) it might be  
 ‘ thought ridiculous to speak of *Stage-Players*; but  
 ‘ seeing Excellency in the meanest Things deserves  
 ‘ Remembring, and *ROSCIUS* the Comedian, is re-  
 ‘ corded in History with such Commendation, it  
 ‘ may be allow'd us to do the like with some of our  
 ‘ Nation, *RICHARD BURBAGE* and *EDWARD*  
 ‘ *ALLEN*, *Two such Actors as no Age must ever look*  
 ‘ *to see the like.*                      *Chronicle of England.*

‘ Have we not seen in our Time a famous Scho-  
 ‘ lar come out of the *Theatre*, *Mr. EDWARD ALLEN*,  
 ‘ a Player himself, famous as well for his Honesty,  
 ‘ as for his Acting, who hath left behind him a  
 ‘ worthy Testimony of his Christian Charity to all  
 ‘ Posterity.                      *BAKER'S THEATRE Vindicated.*

The

‘ The best Actors of our Time ALLEN and  
‘ BURBAGE ; what Plays were ever so pleasing as  
‘ where their Parts had the greatest Part !

*Ibidem.*

‘ The most worthy famous Mr. EDWARD ALLEN.  
HEYWOOD’s *Apology.*

‘ EDWARD ALLEN that Ornament of *Black-*  
‘ *Fryars* Stage, and to his Profession ; to the One,  
‘ on Account of his excellent Action, to the other,  
‘ of his exemplary Piety, in founding DULWICH  
‘ HOSPITAL in *Surry.*

LANGBAIN.

‘ Being a Man,  
‘ Whom we may rank with (doing no One Wrong)  
‘ *Proteus* for Shapes, and *Roscius* for a Tongue.

HEYWOOD’s Prologue to MARLOW’s  
*Jew of Malta.*

Nay see what *Malevolent* BEN. has said of him,  
in *Epigram* 89.

*If Rome so great, and in her wisest Age*  
*Fear’d not to boast the Glories of her Stage ;*  
*As skilful Roscius, and grave Æsop, Men*  
*Yet crown’d with Honours as with Riches, then,*  
*Who had no less a Trumpet of their Name,*  
*Than Cicero whose every Breath was Fame.*  
*How can so great Example die in Me*  
*That ALLEN, I shou’d pause to publish Thee ?*  
*Who both their Graces in thyself hast more*  
*Outstript, than they did all that went before.*  
*And*



*And present Worth in all dost so contract,  
As others speak but only thou dost Act  
Wear this Renown. 'Tis just that who did give  
So many Poets Life, by One shou'd live.*

And again, Sir Richard Baker, in the Life of King James thus — ‘ About this time also EDWARD ALLEN, of Dulwich, in Surrey, founded a fair ‘ Hospital at DULWICH, for Six poor Men, and ‘ Six poor Women, and for Twelve poor Children, from the Age of Four or Six Years, to be ‘ there maintain’d and taught till the Age of ‘ Fourteen or Sixteen, and to have a Schoolmaster ‘ with Dyet and a convenient Stipend. This Man ‘ may be an Example; who having gotten his ‘ Wealth by Stage-Playing converted it to this pious Use, not without, a kind of Reputation to the ‘ Society of Players.

*Abi (tu P.) & fac Similiter.*

*Vide Inscription on the Hospital.*

\*\*\*\*\*

ROBERT ARMINE.

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6/ This Man was one of the principal Comedians, in the Original Performance, of Ben. Johnson's *Alchymist* which was first play'd in 1710. You'll find his Name stands the Fifth, but as the Actors are not printed in those old *Dramas*, opposite to the Characters perform'd by them, as the Practise is now, I am in doubt, which way his Talent lay in the Profession. For all Johnson's *Dramatis Personæ*

*Personæ* are set before the Plays, and the List of Performers after the Play ; so that we can only guess who did such and such Characters. And in the old *Folio* Edition of *Shakespear*, this Matter is left more puzzling, for you have there but one general Catalogue of Performers to that whole Set of Plays ; wherein His is the fifteenth Name.

Whatever Figure He made as an *Actor*, I find He made a Shift to appear as an *Author*, and publish'd a Play, call'd, *The History of the two Maids of Moorclack*, printed 1609.

\*\*\*\*\*;\*\*\*\*\*;\*\*\*\*\*;\*\*\*\*\*

# RICHARD BURBAGE.

\*\*\*\*\*;\*\*\*\*\*;\*\*\*\*\*;\*\*\*\*\*

He is often recorded for his Gracefulness of Action, and Excellence of Performance, by Sir RICHARD BAKER in his *Chronicle of England*; *Theatre Vindicated*; in WANLEY'S *History of Man*; HEYWOOD'S *Apology for Actors*; and by CAMBDEN, LANGBAIN, &c. And as *Allen* is call'd The *Roscius*, he is term'd The *Æsopus* of the ENGLISH STAGE: But he possess'd the Glory of it, much longer than *Allen*, and reign'd in full Splendor as Chief Player, as you find by all the old *Drama's* whilst he was in Being; where he is always *principally* mention'd, like the BETTERTON of that Age; and so of Course could not be without the Pleasure and Improvement of great and good Conversation: He was the Original *Richard the Third*, and particularly distinguish'd, characteriz'd, and greatly talk'd of for that Part.

I remember two Lines in an old Poem which gives an Instance of it,

‘ *For when he wou’d have said, King Richard  
dy’d,*  
‘ *And call’d A Horfe! A Horfe! He Burbage  
cry’d!*

When he had finish’d his Part in this Life, some Person quoted his Departure, on his Grave-Stone, in a Style he had been acquainted with long before his Death; as you’ll find it in *Camden’s Remains*, *Exit BURBAGE.*

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### NATHAN. FIELD.

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Likewise among the Performers in the *Folio* Edition of *Shakespear*; but it appears by *Johnson’s Drama’s*, that from the Year 1600 to 1609, he was among the *Children of her Majesty’s Chappel*, by whom *Cynthia’s Revels*, *Poetaster*, and the *Silent Woman* were first represented. These Children were, at this Time, in very great Vogue, as is evident by the Numbers of Comedies they acted; and grew so in Estimation and Repute, that they out-rivall’d the Top-Theatres: Which is apparent by the Satyrical Part of a Scene in *Hamlet* against them. And as it contains a Theatrical Piece of History, concerning the Players in Question, it may not be too digressive to give a Quotation thereof; for this is granted both by *Mr. Pope* and *Mr. Theobald*.

H A M-



HAMLET. *Act* II.

*Hamlet.* What Players are they?

*Rosen.* Even those you were wont to take such Delight in, the Tragedians of the City.

*Ham.* How chances it they travel? Their Residence, both in *Reputation* and *Profit* was better both Ways.

*Ros.* I think their Inhibition comes by the means of the late Innovation.

*Ham.* Do they hold the same Estimation they did, when I was in the City? Are they so follow'd?

*Ros.* No, indeed, they are not.

*Ham.* How comes it? Do they grow refty?

*Ros.* Nay, their Endeavour keeps in the wonted Pace: But there is, Sir, *An Airy of Children*, little Yases, that cry out on the Top of the Question, and are most tyrannically clapp'd for't; These are now the Fashion, and so berattle the common Stages (so they call them) that many wearing Rapiers are afraid of Goose-Quills, and dare scarce come thither.

*Ham.* What are they? Children! Who maintains them? How are they escoted? Will they pursue the Quality no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow *themselves* to common Players, (as it is most like, if their Means are no better) their Writers do them Wrong, to make them exclaim against their own Succession?



between *Rash*, *Scattergood*, *Bubble*, &c. there is this Joke upon *Green*.

*Rash*. But what shall's do, when we have din'd?  
Shall's go see a Play?

*Scatt*. Yes faith Brother, if it please you, let's go see a Play at *the Globe*.

*Bub*. I care not, any whither, so *the Clown* have a Part: For i'faith, I am no body without a Fool.

*Ger*. Why then we'll go to the RED-BULL: They say *Green's* a good Clown.

*Bub*. *Green!* *Green's* an Ass!

*Scatt*. Wherefore do you say so?

*Bub*. Indeed I ha' no Reason; for they say, *he is as like me as ever he can look*.

This now is an Instance of a very particular Kind, where *Poeta loquitur*: But I don't believe there can be any such Example produc'd, where the Player speaks *in propria Personâ*, otherwise than the Poet *has set down for him*, even among those *who play'd your Clowns*: And 'tis plain, that when 'twas practis'd by some in the Time of Action, 'twas utterly condemn'd and exploded, as 'tis observable by *Shakespear's* Complaint of the same, which *our Prefacer* has quoted from *Hamlet*, but was never prevalent enough to be inserted into his *written Parts* or *Plays*, for then we should have had some Examples of this Fault in the *Folio* Edition of *his Works*, whereas there is not one Instance of the like throughout that Volume, tho' it was printed by the *Players* long after his Death, and, as *Mr. Pope* assures us, *from piecemeal written Parts* and *Interpolated Copies*.  
What



What *Shakespear's* Reproof in *Hamlet* aim'd at, was only an occasional Vice in those concern'd in the *Characters* of *low Life*; to which Class of Performers there have been, from Age to Age, frequent Indulgences given, by the Spectators, to their *Favourite Comedians*; tho' such have never been encourag'd and establish'd so far, to be grafted into the Productions of the Press.

Before I quit this Man's Name, I will give you a presumptive Observation, that has escap'd Mr. *Pope* and Mr. *Theobald*, among all their Gueffes. In the old *Folio* Edition of the Play of *Henry* the VIth, where the *Character* is speaking of Sir *John Falstaff's* Death, 'tis said,

‘ *His Nose was as sharp as a Pen, and a Table of green Fields.*

Our *last* profound *Editor* says, ‘ This was a pleasant Mistake of the Stage-Editors, who printed from the common piecemeal written Parts in the Play-house. A Table was here directed to be brought in (it being a Scene in a Tavern where they drink at parting) and this Direction crept into the Text from the Margin. *Greenfield* was the Name of the Property Man, in that time, who furnish'd Implements, &c. for the Actors. *A Table of Greenfield's.*

This Conjecture Mr. *Theobald* has confuted, but agrees it might be a *Stage-Direction*, yet has rightly distinguish'd it, that it must be, even so, for the subsequent Scene, and a Direction to the *Scene-keepers*,

keepers, not to the *Property-Man*, and therefore renders it thus, *Take TABLE OFF - - - and the next being an open Field-Scene in France, that the Scene-men should get ready the Prospect of GREEN FIELDS.*

Upon this Foundation I build my *Remark*. I say, if there was any marginal Quotation which was the Cause of this Error; as 'tis the Practice of the Prompter to write in the Margin of the Copies his Memorandums of Direction for the Stage-keepers, Scene-keepers, Property-Men, &c. and withal to give Notice to the several Actors to be ready, who are to enter in an ensuing Scene, this might ha' been a Direction in another Form than what is above suppos'd. There is a Circumstance of modern Date (besides the old ones given by Mr. Pope of Cowley and Kemp and Jack Wilson, in *Much-a-do about nothing*) where the Actors Names have been inserted instead of the *Personæ Dramatis*, and that is in the Play of *MARY Queen of Scots*; the first Impression whereof was work'd off from a Copy stolen from the Play-house, that had the Performers Names in the Margin for the Use of the Prompter, instead of the Characters some considerable Time before their proper Place of Entrance, and are printed therein accordingly. So 'tis likewise probable, that from the Prompter's *Stage-Direction* made in *this Place* in the Margin of his Book, this Blunder has crept into the Press, which was only a *Memorandum to give Instructions to the Scene-men to take at the End of that Scene - - - TABLE OFF; and Notice to the Players* (there being two here mention'd, whose Names  
are

are agreeable to the Words) *to be ready for a sequent Scene, as thus* - - - TABLE OFF - - GREEN, FIELD, &c.

So much for Guess-Work: If there was any *Stage-Direction* from whence this Corruption sprung, I still suppose *this* preferable to any former Comment of that Kind. But, indeed, I must own, that I rather chuse Mr. *Theobald's* last Gloss, publish'd in his *Specimen*, where he makes the Text thus: *His Nose was as sharp as a Pen, and a'bab- bled of green Fields, or he talk'd of green Fields*, very agreeable to the Condition of the Person spoke of, and in true Character of the Person speaking.

That *Gentleman* has fully prov'd his Capacity superior to every *former Editor*, and thereupon the Town is eager to receive his Publication of *Shakespear*. I don't doubt, but the largest Expectations of the Publick will be amply gratify'd therein, since there is scarce one Reading, which *The RESTORER* has hitherto produc'd, but has greatly the Advantage of our *PREFACER*; and, as far as I can find, all Men are agreed (especially since they have Mr. *Pope's* Permission for it, *That the Text ought to be establish'd accordingly*.

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THOMAS HEYWOOD.

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This *Aetor* was the most voluminous *Author*, that ever handled *Dramatick Poetry* in our Language; for by his own Attestation, he had an en-  
tire



tire Hand, or at least a main Finger, in the writing of *two hundred and twenty* Plays ; tho' there were but *five and twenty* entire Plays of his remaining in *Langbain's* Time. And yet they were in his own Days accounted of the second Rate. He was a general Scholar, and an indifferent Linguist, as his several Translations from *Lucian, Erasmus, Textor, Beza, Buchanan*, and other Latin and Italian Authors, sufficiently declare : And in his Writings has borrow'd the most shining Passages and Ornaments of *Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Seneca, Plautus, &c.* The particular List and Account of his Plays you will find in *Langbain*, and other Catalogues.

All which, *Heywood* declares were publickly acted often, and not with the least Applause, by *two Companies at once*, and at sundry Times throng'd *three several Theatres* with numerous and mighty Auditories ; that several of them, before their Appearance on the publick Theatres, were presented at Court to *their Majesties*, in the Presence of sundry Foreign Ambassadors ; and that in general, they past the Censure, not only of the *Plebe and Gentry*, but of the *Patricians, &c.*

He wrote several other Pieces in Verse and Prose, *viz. The Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels*, a Poem ; *An Apology for Actors* ; *The Life and Troubles of Queen Elizabeth* from her Cradle to her Crown ; *The exemplary Lives and Acts of nine Women Worthies*. The general History of *Women, &c.* Of him you may see more in *Langbain, Phillips, Winstanley, &c.*

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HEMINGS and CONDELL.

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These two PLAYERS were *Shakespear's* EDITORS, and made considerable Figures according to their several Capacities in the Profession. There is scarce one *Drama* of those Days without their Names. They were of the chief Rank of Performers in *Johnson's*, *Massinger's*, and *Shakespear's* Plays; and, as I think, *Condell* was a *Comedian*, and *Hemings* a *Tragedian*. The last in his later Years became Master or Manager of the Playhouse he belong'd to, as appears by a Speech in one of BEN's Plays: And, besides their Acting, they both follow'd Printing.

This is all I know historically of them, in relation of their Acting; but 'tis now requisite to say something in their particular Defence, as *Printers* and *Publishers*.

3/ 'Tis true, they were the Persons who collected the Plays of *Shakespear*, and publish'd them together in a *Folio* Edition 1623, wherein it can't be deny'd, but there are innumerable Mistakes; all which I believe may be indifferently accounted for, without any Discredit to them, or Shame to their Fraternity. 'Tis not to be depended upon, that *Shakespear* ever publish'd any one of his Plays himself, tho' he frequently revised and altered several of their Copies: But the Case was with him as with Mr. *Heywood* last mention'd (de-  
clar'd

clar'd in the Preface to one of his Plays) *That be-  
used to part with his Copies to the Players, and  
therefore suppos'd he had no further Right to print  
them without their Consent* : Or could it be agree-  
able to his Inclination as a Player to make a Pub-  
lication of them ; for it seems it was then thought  
against the peculiar Profit of the *Houses*, to have  
the Plays abroad in the World, and a main Point  
of Policy to preserve them from the Press : And,  
indeed, 'tis very possible, that this was what chief-  
ly contributed to the Support of so many *Stages* at  
a Time ; the Town having no other Opportunity  
of enjoying the Writings of those *Dramatick*  
Poets, but by paying the *Players* for the *Represen-  
tations of them*. And this I take to be the Reason,  
that so few of *this* AUTHOR were printed in his  
Life-time. Our *Editor* can find but eleven, and  
some of them ' had two or more Editions by  
' *different* Printers, with Heaps of Trash *different*  
' from the other, which he fancies was occasion'd  
' by their being taken from *different* Copies, be-  
' longing to *different* Play-houses.' And therefore  
I conclude, that what Copies were exhibited from  
the Press, must have been taken by the Ear, and  
absolutely printed without the Correction, or  
Knowledge, of the *Author*. This certainly was  
the Case ; for 'tis granted, that the several *Play-  
houses* did often act the self-same Plays at the same  
Time, frequently, with Allowance of their Au-  
thors, tho' there were then no printed Copies of  
the same. Probably it might be thus ; that when a  
Play had gone thro' it's *Run* (as we call it) at the  
Theatre where originally perform'd ; the other  
Companies did purchase and procure a *written*



Copy of the same from the *Poet* or the *Players*, whose *Property* it was; and such *Right* was transferr'd and assign'd accordingly, to such *Purchasers*, for the Use of *their Stage*, with the same Privilege of performing, as belong'd to the Original Company: Or sometimes, perhaps, the *contending Theatres* obtain'd, by indirect Methods, the *Transcripts* of *Plays* belonging to the *other Stages*. And from so frequent and double Representations, it is rational to think, that the meaner Class of Printers (who were not under such Restraints and Laws against Pyracies of the Press, which are now in Force) did exhibit surreptitious Copies, taken by the Ear, or by other fraudulent Means. And from hence it is, that *all those first Editions of SHAKESPEAR'S Plays are in every Page so scandalously false spelt, and the learned and unusual Words so intollerably mangled.* And notwithstanding some single Editions have *Shakespear's* Name to them, for the *Revisal* and *Corrections* in the *Title-pages*, that may be only the Artifice of those Bookfellers, and, perhaps, as truly ground'd, as 'tis continu'd; concerning which, take this singular Proof: The first Edition of HENRY THE FOURTH, printed 1599, made Use of by Mr. *Pope*, has the Words in the *Title-page*, *Newly corrected by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*; and this same *Newly corrected by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*, is convey'd down thro' all the *Quarto* Editions of that Play to the last printed (before the *Folio*) in 1622, Six Years after his Death; and even this last (which I have by me) is without the Division of the Acts: So that it is as credible, he corrected the *first*, as he *Newly* did the *last*, after being dead so many Years.

If

If they had the Impudence to steal the Copies, they would hardly be afraid, or ashamed, to put out fresh Editions, under the Title of his *New Corrections*, whenever there were any *Alterations* made by him in the *Original Copies* lodg'd in the *Theatres*, and made apparent by publick Performance. So that, according to this Observation, and several other corroborating Circumstances, I infer, that *Shakespear* never publish'd any one Play himself, or even corrected it for the Press, or was any one *Edition* printed from his own original Manuscript. What then can be said for *Hemings* and *Condell's* Collection? They declare theirs to be purg'd from the Errors of the former Editions, which were all stolen and surreptitious. Now Mr. *Pope* acknowledges this to be true, as to the literal Errors, but, in all other Respects, 'tis far worse, he says, than the *Quarto's*. How then is this to be reconcil'd? Either their Plays must be printed from other pirated and corrupt Copies, or else, if they had the Originals of *Shakespear*, they must be guilty of all the Faults, by *arbitrary Additions*, *Expunctions*, *Transpositions of Scenes and Lines*, *Confusion of Characters and Persons*, *wrong Applications of Speeches*, and the monstrous Heap of Crimes drawn up by this EDITOR.

To clear this up a little, I shall beg Leave to look upon these Men, for a while, only as *Printers* and *Publishers*, without any Regard of their *Playing*. In collecting these Plays, they were under the Difficulty of gathering them from separate Theatres, and different Possessors: For several of his Plays were compos'd for the Use of different Houses;

Houses; and tho', as I observ'd before, that sometimes two or more Companies had, on Purchase, an equal Right of playing the same Pieces, or, by other Ways, did practise it; yet the sole Power of publishing every Tragedy and Comedy, &c. must be vested legally in the primitive Place of acting it. You may see, by *Johnson's Folio*, that his Plays were acted by different Setts of People; and I think I can make it appear, that the *List of Chief Actors*, prefix'd to *Shakespear's*, were never all of One Company: But I suppose it to be universally granted already, that the original Performance of these Plays in Question were at separate Places, and by distinct Companies; if so, you will soon conceive the Trouble and Difficulty these two Men labour'd under in recovering SHAKESPEAR'S *Works* after his Decease. The Materials they had for it may be reckon'd under these Heads.

I. TRUE MANUSCRIPTS, belonging to their own Company (which was the very Body of Comedians this Author was a Member of) wherein perhaps were several *Places, Scenes, Speeches, Sentences, Lines, and Words, &c. shifted and chang'd, alter'd and corrected, obliterated, interlin'd, and interpolated*, of the Poet's own Work, as by repeated Representations he found Occasion to do himself, or direct it to be done; besides being burden'd with *Marginal Quotations*, for the *Entries of the Characters*; and *Directions* for the *Property-Men's Moveables*, and other *Uses of the Prompter*; all which were troublesome to the Press, and caused several Absurdities.

2. FALSE



2. FALSE TRANSCRIPTS, of *other Company's*, either from the *Errors* of *Copyers*, occasion'd by *Alterations*, or *worn-out Originals*, where the Text was nigh illegible, or very obscure ; besides the Accidents above.

3. INCORRECT FIRST COPIES, of some *other of his Plays*, that were not in *general Acting*, but only subsisted for the *Run*, and receiv'd not the Success to be the *Stock Plays*; which, in *their Days*, perchance, were almost irrecoverable, and very likely by *Fragments* only, and, even those, in the Hands of Persons remote from the Stage.

4. SOME PRINTED PLAYS ; (of which there were no Manuscripts existing) that they could by no other Means insert in their Volume, than in making use of the *common Editions*, corrupt as they were ; being highly necessary to make up the Collection.

After all this, must be consider'd too, the Inaccuracy and unpolish'd State of the Press in those Days, which is easily discover'd by the impure Impressions of other Plays (especially since we have this Gentleman's Opinion for it) *There being at that Time no Correctors of the Press, or such as were very illiterate*. These are the proper Considerations, which, if justly weigh'd in their different Natures and Kinds, might have made *Aristotle* and *Cicero*, as well as *Shakespear*, (had their Works undergone the same Fate) appear to want Sense as well as Learning ! and not the

the Reflections he has unjustly cast upon the Players as Actors and Editors. For I would fain be resolv'd of this Gentleman, whether these Works might not have pass'd to us, in as bad a Condition, thro' Persons Hands of another Profession, who were to collect them thro' all the Disadvantages here sum'd up? 'Tis highly probable, I think, if the whole *Body*, or a *Committee* of the *Players*, had apply'd themselves duely as *Editors*, they could have produc'd a much perfecter Edition, and one that would not have disgrac'd their Judgments; and therefore it was negligent in them not to do it, in Honour of their departed Brother, who had been the main Support of their Stages. But as they did not engage themselves in this Affair, the Trash of these Plays cannot be imputed to them in gross, for being his Actors; nor can we charge these *two Men* further than *Tradesmen* and *Publishers*, and as *Proprietors* only of these *purchas'd Copies*.

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WILLIAM KEMPE.

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Was the *PINKETHMAN* of that Age. If he is the only celebrated *Comedian* of those Days, who is certainly known to be without the Advantage of a liberal Education, tho' of great Capacity in his Business; His Natural Force, and Scenical Genius, recommended him to a Familiarity and Conversation with Men of Learning and superior Life; and, in short, he was the Darling of the Court and Country. 'Twas said, in that Time,  
There

*There was not a Country Wench, that could dance Sellenger's Round, but talk'd of WILL KEMPE and DICK BURBAGE. He succeeded TARLETON (says Heywood) as well in the Favour of her Majesty Queen ELIZABETH, as in the Opinion and good Thoughts of the general Audience. And the Condition of this Man is prov'd to be far above what this Prefacer has stated him in; by a Piece of Ill-nature of a poor invidious Poet, who for having a Repulse at the Theatre, throws this Reflection on the superior Fortune and Success of the whole Rank; tho' occasion'd only by Two of them; this Kempe and Burbage by Name: which I may very justly quote at length, since by that Person's Snarling thereat, the Players of that Age are confess'd to stand in a better Light, than they are plac'd in by modern Relation: as you will find it spoken by the Character of Studioso, in an old Play call'd, *The Return from Parnassus*, acted in the Year 1606*

- ' But is't not strange, these MIMICK APES shou'd prize,
- ' Unhappy Scholars at a hireling Rate!
- ' Vile World, that lifts them up to high Degree,
- ' And treads us down in groveling Misery!
- ' England affords those glorious Vagabonds,
- ' That carried, earst, their Fardels on their Backs,
- ' Coursers to ride on thro' the gazing Streets,
- ' Sooping it in their glaring Sattin Suits,
- ' And Pages to attend their Masterships:
- ' With mouthing Words that better Wits have fram'd,
- ' They purchase Lands, and now Esquires are made.

E

JOHN



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 JOHN LOWIN.  
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*Those excellent Players of the last Age* Lowin, Taylor, &c. Mr. LOWIN play'd originally *Domitian* in MASSINGER's *Roman Actor* in 1629 and many other remarkable Dramatick Characters: besides his being an eminent Player, he was a Man well reputed in private Life. I remember two Lines which confirm him to be one of the *Supports* of the Stage; 'tis in a Satyr on *Ben Johnson*.

' Let LOWIN cease, and TAYLOR scorn to touch,  
 ' The loathed Stage, for thou hast made it such.

I am apt to think, he did not rise to his Perfection, and most exalted State in the Theatre till after *Burbage*; tho' he play'd what we call *Second* and *Third Characters* in his Time, and particularly *Henry the Eighth*, originally; from an Observation of whose Acting it in his later Days. *Sir William Davenant* convey'd his Instructions to Mr BETTERTON: And I think he was the *Original Hamlet*. That he was Sizeable to play *Henry the Eighth*, and yet perform'd the Part of *Hamlet* is reconciled by observing the *Queen* says, in the fighting Scene between *Him* and *Laertes*, "He is *FAT and scant of Breath*. I could produce some Instances of this Gentleman's being admitted to a *Ladies Toilette*, as well as to some *Lord's Tables*, but I reserve those for the next Edition

dition of this laudable Work which I shall greatly improve and publish, cum *Notis Variorum*.

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## CHRISTOPHER MARLOW.

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He trod the Stage with Applause, both from *Q. Elizabeth* and *K. James*; nor was he accounted a less excellent Poet by *Johnson*: In what Esteem he was for his writings, may be gather'd from part of a Copy of Verses written in that Age, call'd *A Censure of the Poets* where he is thus spoke of,

- ‘ Next MARLOW bath’d in the Thespian Springs,
- ‘ Had in him those brave sublunary Things,
- ‘ That your first Poets had; his Raptures were
- ‘ All Air and Fire, which made his Verses clear;
- ‘ For that fine Madness still he did retain,
- ‘ Which rightly shou’d possess a Poet’s Brain.’

His Genius inclin’d him wholly to Tragedy, and he has oblig’d the World with seven Plays of this Kind, of his own Composure, besides one in which he joyn’d with *Nash* call’d *Dido Queen of Carthage*.

1. *Dr. Faustus’s Tragical History.*
2. *Edward the Second.*
3. *The Jew of Malta.*
4. *Lust’s Dominion* or the Lascivious Queen.
5. *Massacre of Paris.*
6. *Tamberlain the Great,* or the Scythian Shepherd.

He

He wrote besides a Poem call'd *Hero and Leander* whose mighty Lines (crys one) Mr. Ben Johnson, a Man sensible enough of his own Abilities, was often heard to say, that they were Examples, fitter for Admiration, than Parallel.

This Poem being left imperfect by the Author, who according to Mr. Philips in some riotous Fray came to an untimely and violent End, it was finish'd by Mr. Chapman.

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 RICHARD TARLTON.  
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‘ And to make their Comedies compleat,  
 ‘ RICHARD TARLTON, who for the Part call'd  
 ‘ The *Clowns* Part, never had his Match, never  
 ‘ will have.

*Baker's Chronicle.*

‘ I must remember TARLTON, in his Time  
 ‘ gracious with the Queen his Sovereign, and in  
 ‘ the People's general Applause.

*Heywood.*

. This Man, even Johnson, who libels all the Fraternity, mentions with some Respect in Regard to his Capacity of supporting a Character; in the Person of the *Stage-keeper* in the *Induction* to his Comedy of *Bartholomew Fair*.

His



His Epitaph which you will find in CAMDEN'S *Remains*, gives a large Encomium on his Power of Performance.

‘ Hic fitus est, cujus *Vox Vultus, Aëtio* possit  
‘ *Ex Heraclito* reddere *Democritum*.

This Gentleman (our Prefacer) delivering so mean a Character of these remote Players contrary to the Dignity of their Capacities, and Reputation; puts me in Mind of another particular Instance of the same Kind, I have met with, concerning this same TARLTON: By which 'tis observable how Distance of Time corrupts the Opinion of Things to the Incurious: For by an Alehouse Sign of *Tarlton*, in the Borough of *Southwark*, (as I believe it is to be seen to this Day,) they have made this celebrated Comedian a meer *Tabor-and-pipe* Man.

JOHN UNDERWOOD.

This was another Actor who was bred in *Q. Elizabeth's* Chapel; and as one of the *Children* thereto belonging, was in the Number of Performers of *Johnson's Cynthia's Revels*, and *The Poetaster*, which were acted by them, in 1600 and 1601, and before he was ten Years older was admitted into, and made no inconsiderable Figure in, the Theatres; for in the Years 1610 and 11, he is ranked amongst the principal Actors of the  
*King's*

*King's Company in the Drama's of Shakespear, Johnson, &c.*

I remark'd before how prophetically *Shakespear* spoke of these Children coming to the *Common Stages* and tho' perhaps This was not the very *Class* he alludes to in *Hamlet*, (for the Custom had been long practis'd ) it is plain they came to it within his Life Time: for I am inclin'd to think that they were retain'd in, and attach'd to the publick Theatres, before he wrote his *Midsummer's Night's Dream*, and that he design'd the *Walk* of the *Fairies* there, to put them in a more natural View of acting than they commonly were shown in before. He has taken the like Occasion in other Places, to use them in a proper Manner, as Children, (not as they commonly play'd for themselves like profess'd Actors and in Characters of all Degrees and Ages) viz. *Ariel* &c. in the *Tempest* and in several Plays else, more or less, as young *Women*, *Fairies*, *Spirits*, *Pages* &c. I have been confin'd to a Point of Time so distant from ours, that I have only a Glimpse of some of their Characters; however, this Man's Education sets him above the Rank of Life, and Degree of Understanding that this late Editor has plac'd them in, in general, and that is sufficient for my present Purpose. And had I the larger Field of the succeeding Stages to tread in, I cou'd produce such ample and extensive Memoirs, as would prove there have been among the *English* ACTORS from those Days to these, Men of as fine Genius; of as good natural Parts; of liberal Education and Politeness; of refined Discourse and Conversation;  
of

of exalted Merit and Esteem; and (with all humble Deference to our Prefacer, I presume to say) of as great Wit and Judgment thro the whole Class, as among the Multitude of Professors of any other Science, for such a limited Term of Years.

These with many more not less considerable, (as *Beeston, Benfield, Ostler, Philips, Perkins, Taylor, Wilson, cum multis aliis*; of all whom there can be sufficient Evidence produc'd of their Merit, in their Business, and of their Capacities and Condition otherwise) were all *Coetanean* Fellow-Players with *Hemings* and *Condel* and with SHAKESPEAR. How far they have been injur'd by Mr. *Pope* I leave to your impartial Judgment; and why he was forc'd to say what is so utterly groundless and false I cannot determine: Sure I am he has greatly misrepresented their State and Condition; their Figure and Reputation; their Capacities and Judgment; and speaks of them but very unskilfully, or *if his Knowledge were more, it is much darkned in his Malice*; and it may reasonably be said, that all his Calumny towards them proceeds from Envy, Folly, or Mistaking; Tho I am apt to assign it rather to his Ill-Nature than to his Ignorance; for he delivers himself in such splenetick Terms, that you may easily discover he is not so much affected that their Station, and Esteem in Life, was no better than he represents it, as he repines that it is much alter'd since.

— *Invidus alterius rebus macrescit opimis.*

'Tis



'Tis beyond all further Dispute, that the *Players* we are speaking of, made a better Figure in Life than this *Prefacer* says they did; and upon the Whole, we may justly conclude notwithstanding all he has offer'd to the contrary; that *The Condition of that Class of People, was not inferior to what it is in our Days. That the Top of the Profession, tho' meer Players, were Gentlemen of the Stage as they are now: That they were sometimes placed at the Lord's Table, as well as led into the Buttery by his Steward, and enjoy'd all and every the Comforts and Advantages possess'd by the later Professors in the familiar Conversation of the Nobility, and an Intimacy (I may say Dearness) with Persons of the first Condition. In fine, that they were in as flourishing a State, in as great Glory, in as grand Esteem, in as good Circumstances, private and publick (consideratis considerandis) as any of that Calling ever were, or ever will be.*

Then or thereabouts were SIX establish'd THEATRES, which are specify'd very humorously in these old Lines, spoke in the Character of a *Puritan* in *The Muses Looking Glass*. "It was a zealous Prayer I heard a Brother make concerning these Playhouses."

———— ' That *The GLOBE*  
 ' Wherein quoth he, reigns a *World* of Vice,  
 ' Had been consum'd: *The PHOENIX, burnt to*  
*Asbes:*  
 ' The FORTUNE, whipt for a *Blind Whore*  
*BLACK FRYARS,* H

- He wonders how it scap'd *demolishing*
- *Ith' Time of Reformation*: lastly he wish'd
- The BULL might *cross the Thames* to the BEAR-GARDEN
- And there be *soundly baited*.

Not only the publick Playhouses, but the whole Kingdom in general was a perfect Stage. In *Shakespear's Days* and *Johnson's*, Queen *Elizabeth* and King *James's* Queen, with all their Ladies of Honour, and the Nobility of both Sexes, acted in several *Interludes*, and *Masques*, at Court; whose particular Names are set down in *Johnson* &c. And not only the *Royal Family*, but several of the prime Quality, had their peculiar Companies of Players; The *Crown'd Heads* and their Trains, play'd at Court; The Universities acted at their *Theatres* and *Colleges*; The *Lawyers* perform'd Dramatick Entertainments in their *Halls* and *Inns*; the Gentry at their private *Seats* and *Villa's* in the Country; the Children and Scholars of most other *Seminaries* of Learning throughout the Kingdom; and the profess'd Actors at their publick *Theatres*, in *Schools*, in *Halls*, in *Inns*, in *Colleges*, at Court, in *City*, *Town* and *Country*. In brief, it might then most properly be said, *Totus Mundus agit Histrionem*.

Tho' I am thus warm in vindicating the Characters of our *Scenical Ancestors*, from what this learned SATYRIST has magisterially deliver'd against them, I have had a strict Regard to Truth, and very candidly observ'd the dull Duty of an Author (or in another Reading, the Duty of a dull Author) in delivering nothing but what is *ex fide Codicum* upon Authority, and *in verbum Histrionis*

I have duely regarded this Line of SHAKESPEAR, *Nothing extenuate or set down ought in Malice:* But this *universal Calumniator* scorns to confine himself to Sincerity and plain Matter of Fact in *this Preface* as much as in his *darling Poem*; tho' *Shakespear* has denounc'd the dreadful Consequence of misusing the Players, in these terrible Words, *After your Death you had better have a bad Epitaph than their ill Report while you live.* There ever was an Enmity in some Authors towards the Actors; and in the Debate between them, according to *Shakespear's* Phrase, *There has been much throwing about of Brains*; for in his Days, 'twas manag'd between *his Stage* and *Johnson*, with such Vehemence, that that Player, facetiously says, *there was no Money bid for the Question, unless the Poet and the Player went to Cuffs in the Argument.* It is no otherwise to be accounted for, than as a general Emulation of Professions, and the Envy of clashing Functions, according to the *first Air* of the *Beggar's Opera*.

' *Through all the Employments of Life*

' *Each Neighbour abuses his Brother, &c.*

I should indeed have said something of SHAKESPEAR in the Rank of Acting, but we have little or no Hints of his Capacity that Way. His Name is with the chief Performers of JOHNSON'S *Every Man in his Humour*, first acted by the Lord Chamberlain's Servants in 1598, but he's not mention'd in the Drama of *Every Man out of his Humour*, acted by the same Company in 1599. Tho' he is again inserted with the same Set of People in 1603 in *Sejanus*, who were then King James's Servants; and is no where after mention'd. What he play'd here



here we can only guess at, and there is no certain Tradition of any one Part he acted, but that mention'd by Mr. ROWE, the *Ghost in Hamlet*. His greater Alacrity to writing, took up his Time too far, to grow considerable as an Actor; for he liv'd but to the Age of Fifty three, and the *Prefacer* to this Edition of his Works, cannot trace any one Play of his Author, before his *Thirtieth* Year; and 'tis yet in Question whether he wrote for the Stage after he retir'd from it. So that all the Dramatick Pieces we have of his, must at that Rate have been compos'd within the Limits of *Ten* or *Twelve* Years. X How incredible this is I need not remark. Be this as it will, tho' he made no great Figure in his Performance on the Stage, I think 'tis possible he enjoy'd as much Advantage of Conversation, from being a Player as a Poet: And in one Word, I conclude, that as he was born a *Poet* and bred a *Player*, his Judgment improv'd from *Both* to be so greatly *Right*, that I will venture to call him (in my own *right-wrong*, *ungraceful*, *Taylorlike* Judgment as a *Player*) *The best Stage Poet that ever wrote in this or any other Language*, and to say that he will be eternally so esteem'd to the Honour of our Nation, and the Glory of our Theatres, thro' all succeeding Ages, whilst *Stage* or *State* exist.

I have but one Observation more, concerning this *Father of the Stage* and then I shall close my *Epistle*. How much is it to be lamented, that *Two* large *Chests* full of this GREAT MAN's loose *Papers* and *Manuscripts*, in the Hands of an ignorant *Barker* of *WARWICK*, (who married one of the *Descendants* from *Shakespear*) were carelessly scatter'd

X Admitting that Shakespear was thirty years <sup>and</sup> of age when he produced his first play, and allowing 3 years at the latter end of his life to have been productive of nothing dramatic, there still remains twenty years during which he composed his plays.

and thrown about, as Garret Lumber and Litter, to the particular Knowledge of the late *Sir William Bishop*, till they were all consum'd in the general Fire and Destruction of that Town? Here was a Loss! Here Ruin and Devastation triumph'd! Here Desolation raged to its highest Pitch! and flamed with utmost Fury! -- The private Buildings, publick Edifices, the Effects and Goods of general and peculiar Persons, could be repair'd with like: But this is a Misfortune wholly irreparable and was, and is, and will be to all future Ages a general Calamity; and to the Players in particular *'tis such Perdition as nothing else could match*. These were perhaps the Labours of his retir'd Years, which he spent at his native *Stratford*, in a calm Retreat from the Stage, from Town and Business: As his Judgment with his Years advanc'd, and as he wrote not here, for pecuniary Advantage or popular Applause, no doubt but these were his *Superior Productions*, and the want of them, therefore much more to be deplor'd! yet if they had escap'd the Flames, 'tis probable they might have perished through Neglect, and Ignorance of their Value, as in the Case of the *Baker* here, by whom, (like *Æsop's Dunghil Cock*) the smallest Quantity of *Corn* was more esteem'd than both these Chests of *Jewels*. Or in Case they had not been remov'd from *Stratford* where this *Immortal* left his Mortality, but had fallen into the Hands of his native Neighbours, 'tis possible we might have had even these his purer Works, with large Absurdities as gross from hence, as what Errors in his Labours less correct, the *Players* have given in their Publication, since all the Learning of that Parish, (if  
owing

owing to their *Defect* of *Judgment*, and *Meanness* of *Condition* I can't say) then, was not sufficient to leave us one *Monumental Inscription* in the great Church of *Stratford upon Avon*, where *Shakespeare* lies interr'd, but what is more notoriously false spelt, than any other Records of the Dead in the Kingdom; the best of which is his own, and that is something odd and remarkable.

Good Frend for Iesus SAKE forbear  
To digg TE Dust EncloAsed HERe  
Blese be TE Man T spares TEs Stones  
And curst be He T moves my Bones.

Now this is by much the least faulty, among all the Grave-Stones in that Church of so long standing; and the rest in general are so preposterous in their Characters and Spelling, that 'tis difficult to pore out the Meaning. I think it may be fairly ask'd, Whether these were then the Faults of the Composers of all these Epitaphs, or of the Person or Persons that carv'd or imprinted the Words on the Stones? — The Faults in the other Epitaphs, 'tis true, might be in the Composers, or in the Transcribers, whom (if such there were) we may call Editors; or in the Mechanick: One or other, or even all of them, might contribute to the large Confusion of Sense and Reading, which appears in them to this Day. But this could never be the Case concerning *Shakespeare's* Compositions; for in Regard of his own Epitaph above (if that were his Writing, as the Report goes it was) the false Spelling, and irregular Mixture of Characters could not be his, but the Workman's. No more could the *Orthographical* Faults in all his Plays be His, or his Editors,



tors, but meerly the Blunders of the Mechanics, and the Imperfections of the Press. And I hope all other Errors, however distinguish'd by His *Superfætatations*, or the *PLAYER's Interpolations*, can be reconciled, and perhaps will by the next Editor, without any Scandal and Infamy to the *Profession*, since many of the same Blemishes, in Letters and Words, even in common Sense and Grammar, have escaped Mr. *Hughs*, Mr. *Rowe*, and Mr. *Pope*, the *Poet-Editors*, as well as the *Player-Editors*, '*ad opprobrium usque Criticorum in hunc diem existentes.*' And "this, according to the Weakness of my Skill, and Infancy of my Judgment (in the Words of Mr. *Heywood* the old *Player* above-mention'd) I commit to the Eyes of all favourable and judicial Readers, as well to gratify the Request of some of our well qualified Favourers, as to stop *the envious Exclamations of those who challenge to themselves a Privilege invective, and against all Estates a railing Liberty*: Loath I am, being one of the youngest and weakest of the Nest, to soar this Pitch, before others of the same Brood, more Fledge, and of better Wing than myself; but tho' they whom more especially this Task concerns, both for their Ability in Writing, and Sufficiency in Judgment, are content to over-slip so necessary a Subject, I thought it better to stammer out my Mind, than not to speak at all; to scribble down a Mark instead of writing a Name, and to stumble on the Way, rather than to stand still, and not to proceed on so necessary a Journey." Who am,

*Yours,*

ANTI-SCRIBLERUS HISTRIONICUS.

F I N I S.



